AFTERMATH

THE EAST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 FALL 1988

NEWSLETTER NAME CHOSEN

by
John Lamb, Jr., - Editor

As you can see by the heading on this issue of our newsletter, AFTERMATH was the most popular name in the list published in the last newsletter. Many thanks to all the alumni who participated in the process of choosing it.

NEW DEPARTMENT HEAD SELECTED

Dr. Stuart Anderson has been chosen to replace Dr. Dale R. Bedgood as Head of the Mathematics Department at ETSU.

Dr. Anderson has been on the ET mathematics faculty since 1973. He received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Oklahoma and other degrees from North Texas State University. Before coming to college teaching, he worked as a geophysical engineer for Geophysical Services Inc. His main area of research is in general topology. He has published articles on geometric topology, number theory and computer-assisted testing. ETSU honors students selected Dr. Anderson as Honors Professor of the Year for 1988.

Dr. Bedgood left the position to return to full-time teaching at the end of the Spring, 1988 semester. Dr. Bedgood had served as department head for the past twenty-one years. On May 6, 1988, he was honored at an appreciation banquet (see story following.)

SECOND ANNUAL HOMECOMING ALUMNI BREAKFAST SCHEDULED

by
John Lamb, Jr., - Editor

The 1988 Homecoming Alumni Breakfast will be held on Saturday, October 22, 1988 at 8:00 a.m. in the Bluebonnet-Pecan-Friendship rooms in the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. There were around 30 alumni, faculty and students present for last year's breakfast and we hope to double that number this year. If you would like to attend, please fill out the form found elsewhere in this newsletter and mail it to the ETSU Mathematics Department by October 14, 1988. We hope to see you there. Other events of the day include: 10:15 - Homecoming Parade, 2:30 - ETSU vs Eastern New Mexico, 5:15 - Alumni Reception. Notice that there is a place on the reservation for the alumni news column. Please send in any information you feel would be interesting.

ROBBIE BABBITT IS TANDY SCHOLAR

by
Dennis Grantham

Ms. Robbie Babbitt (MS 78) was named a Tandy Scholar Teacher by the Tandy Corp. in the spring of 1988. This honor was given to only 12 math and science teachers in the Fort Worth ISD. She teaches algebra and precalculus at Eastern Hills High School. She has served in the Fort Worth ISD for 22 years. Congratulations!

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S COLUMN

by

Stuart Anderson

I hold a considerable privilege in being able to address so many former students of mathematics. It gives me a chance to send greetings to the numerous ones which I remember having in class here at ETSU. It also allows me to meet those who have not been scarred by such an ordeal. Whatever the relationship, I hope that your alliance with the mathematics program at East Texas will be strengthened over the next few years.

I want to thank Dr. Bedgood for his long and distinguished service as department head. He maintained the position well and left it in good repair. He collected a faculty which is devoted to teaching and which now produces high quality undergraduate mathematics students. Many of you who went on to advanced degrees in mathematics, hold teaching positions, or work in industry, are evidence that his efforts were successful. I will do my best to see that his fine work progresses.

In earlier newsletters, I was favored to get to write a column on the awarding of scholarships. However, since Spring 1987 we have not given any. It is not because of a lack of deserving students. One of my goals as department head is to build up a respectable fund from which to distribute premiums to students of merit.

I was amazed by the story which emerged earlier this year of a Dallas disc jockey who asked listeners to send in $20. Although no reason was given whereby anyone would want to contribute that amount, thousands did! The total ran to something over in the six-figure category. How I wish I possessed such charms. Unfortunately, I seem to be deficient in that department. You see I did try the method used by the radio announcer. I thought it would be a good way to raise money for our Mathematics Excellence Scholarship Fund. Not having a place from which to broadcast, I just ambled out onto a street corner and began requesting twenty dollar bills for the Mathematics Excellence Scholarship Fund. The first person gave me about fifty dollars worth of insults. Others that I approached contributed several tons of abuse, barrels of ridicule, and a substantial cargo of disdain. If it were possible to box up all that I received and sell it at a fair market value, we could support anyone who wanted to study mathematics well into the next century.

I shall not do that again. I will study and work on my method and find a better idiot to imitate. I do not look forward to my next attempt at fund-raising; but I do want to build up that scholarship account. Perhaps I can be rescued from further humiliation by an act of Providence.

In spite of my inability to collect money, the department is quite healthy. Enrollment is up significantly this semester. Even though we are busy with the many students here, it is always a pleasure to see our alumni. Please join us for the homecoming activities this year. You will be a welcome sight.

ALUMNI NEWS

by

Dennis Grantham

Much of our alumni information is over a year old. We publish as much as we can but because of space limitations, we have data lag. Please update your files so that what we print will accurate. If you have not sent in any information about yourself, we would be happy to hear from you.

ALPHA GAMMA ALPHA - PI MU EPSILON MATHEMATICS CLUBS ACTIVITIES

by

John Heath - Faculty Sponsor

Officers for the 1988-89 school year were elected in April, 1988. They are Charles Jones of Commerce, Pi Mu Epsilon President; Nicole Ewing of Cooper, Alpha Gamma Alpha President; Kerri Peetz of Ennis, Vice President of both organizations; Kevin Brewer of Commerce, Treasurer of both organizations. We think we have an outstanding group of officers and are looking forward to a great year. Two of our activities that alumni might be interested in attending this year are the Christmas party and the initiation banquet. The Christmas party will be held on Wednesday evening, December 7, 1988, and the initiation banquet will be held on Thursday evening, March 9, 1989. The banquet tickets cost $8.00. If you would like to attend either of these events please call me at (214)886-5946. Banquet reservation

Deadline is March 2, 1989.

THE BEDGOOD APPRECIATION DINNER

by

Dale Bedgood

The evening of May 6, 1988, in which so many friends and alumni honored me with their presence and participation at the dinner that was planned in recognition of my twenty-one years as head of the department of mathematics at ETSU, as indeed a memorable occasion for my family and me. The occasion exceeded all of my expectations and anticipations. It was indeed a delight to see many whom I had not seen for some time. I do consider it a personal honor that you chose to be present at a very special day for me, and I want to express my appreciation for that.

Also, I want to especially thank Bill Aslan and Jack Lamb for planning and making arrangements for the affair. It couldn't have been more complete; every last detail was planned and the orchestration of the evening was perfect.

Dr. Aslan and Dr. Lamb received lots of help and assistance from many of the faculty and students, and I wish to express my thanks to each one for that.

Among of the highlights of the evening were the speeches and program participants. It was their wit, humor, and ability to tell stories that helped those in the audience to have an entertaining, laugh-filled evening.

Again, thanks to all for a wonderful evening for my family and me.

Dale R. Bedgood

(former head, and loving it!)

DEPARTMENTAL SPORTS ACTIVITIES

by

John Heath - Coach

The Irrationals again fielded both basketball and softball teams during the school year 1987-88. Both teams played in recreation leagues, which are deemed the "less competitive" ones by the ETSU Intramural Office.

The basketball team was made up of Stuart Anderson, John Davenport, and John Heath of the Math Department; student workers Chris Sellers and John Griffith from the Math Office; Ronnie Davidson, Zeppa Center; Randy Dillingham and Ben Doughty, Physics; Wendall Edwards, Accounting; Bill Oellermann, v KETR Radio; John Kersey, Finance; Bob Titus, Educational Media and Technology; Henry Ross, P.E. The team was 4 - 2 in league play and dropped the first playoff game. We

considered it a successful season since a few of us were 25 years older than most of our opponents.

The softball team was comprised of Anderson, Davenport, Heath, Sellers, Griffith, Oellermann and Davidson, as well as Vance Underhill and Charlie Jones, Math; Darrell Sturdivant , Computer Center; Mike Sampson, Elementary Education; Charles Goodall and Damon Miller, Intramural Office; Dayton Cole, Legal Office.

The team was 1 - 4, but had a couple of close games which could have gone either way. This was a letdown after winning the Recreation League championship last year, where Howard Lambert pitched the final game and hit two home runs. Howard, unfortunately, suffered a heart attack after that game. Following doctors advice, he did not play in 87-88. As Howard observed at the end of this year's season, "Gee, it's amazing what a difference one player can make! Ha Ha."

MATHEMATICS FACULTY ACTIVITIES

by

John Lamb, Jr. - Editor

The mathematics department faculty for the Fall 1988 term consists of Stuart Anderson, Bill Aslan, Mary Ann Bamsch, Dale Bedgood, Archie Brock, John Davenport, Dennis Grantham, John Heath, John Lamb, Jr., Howard Lambert, Vance Underhill and Sandra Wheeler. Besides teaching courses, some of them have been active in research and other professional activities.

Dr. John Lamb, Jr. presented a paper on April 15, 1988 at the annual meeting of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America entitled "An Analysis of the Kopf-Perron Angle Trisection Approximation Method."

Dr. John Lamb, Jr. has published an article entitled "Trisecting an Angle - Almost" in the March, 1988 issue of The Mathematics Teacher and an article entitled "Factorial-sum Numbers" in the February, 1988 issue of School Science and Mathematics.

ALUMNI BREAKFAST RESERVATION FORM AND/OR ALUMNI NEWS UPDATE

NAME:_____

STREET ADDRESS OR BOX:_____

CITY, STATE & ZIP:_____

PHONE:(___)_____

Please reserve_____places at the Homecoming Alumni Breakfast at $5.00 ea.

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_____

My news for the Alumni News Column is:_____

_____

_____

BOOK REVIEW
by
Vance Underhill

Paul Halmos is one of the most widely recognized mathematicians alive today. This is due partly to his original contributions to mathematics, partly to his outstanding expository skill, and partly to the fact that he is an inveterate traveler and attender of conferences. His book, I Want to be a Mathematician, published by Springer-Verlag in 1985, is a fascinating description of the life of a "major" mathematician. The subtitle of the work is "An Automathography," an indication that almost all of the material in the book is directly related to his professional life. We learn that he was born in Hungary and came to the United States at the age of thirteen, but for all practical purposes the book begins with his college years at Illinois. (Hungary has produced several outstanding mathematicians in this century: von Neumann, Riesz, Halmos, and Erdos, just to name a few).

Halmos has pertinent comments on many topics, including higher education. His wide range of teaching experience certainly qualifies him for such a role. He has had full-time positions at Chicago, Michigan, Illinois, Tulane, Indiana, Santa Barbara, Syracuse, Miami, and Hawaii. This list is not chronological but happens to be his ordering of student quality at these institutions, from highest to lowest. (He also spent a year in Uruguay and has attended conferences in many foreign countries.) His lengthy discussion of the "Moore Method" (or "Texas Method") of teaching, practiced for so many years at The University of Texas by R. L. Moore, is very perceptive.

The book spends almost no time on the technicalities of mathematics. Halmos does try to discuss the creative aspect of the subject as well as his work habits. He obviously enjoys writing and he does it well. The opening sentence of the book is, "I like words more than numbers, and I always did." No doubt this tells us a lot about his expository ability. The style of the book is informal and chatty. There are anecdotes and prejudices and a lot of good advice to practicing mathematicians and teachers. He takes all of his work very seriously, whether it be research, teaching, preparing a talk, reviewing, supervising a dissertation, or any one of a hundred other things. There is a limit, however. He does not respond to requests from "doctoral candidates from the School of Education, with their letters attached to 24-page questionnaires soliciting statistical evidence." The book also includes quite a number of candid photographs of mathematicians, most still alive today.

SEMINAR PROGRAMS FOR FALL 1988
by
John Lamb, Jr. - Editor

The series of mathematical seminars that was begun in October, 1987 will continue through the 1988-89 school year. They are held in Bin-301 at 3:00 p.m. The first one was presented on September 21, 1988 by Dr. John Lamb, Jr. entitled "Optical Illusions;" a slide show of 40 illusions and a discussion of why they work. The second seminar will be presented by Dr. Bill Aslan on October 18, 1988. It will be one of the AIM programs from the MAA entitled "Pricing Auto Insurance." On November 17, 1988, John Davenport will discuss the Freshman Success Seminars that were started on our campus this Fall to help our freshman students do better in college. Spring 89 seminars will also be conducted.

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